

Amendments to the Specification

Please replace the paragraph at page 1, lines 3 through 7 with the following amended paragraph:

This application is related to U.S. Application No. 10/417,414, filed April 15, 2003, now U.S. Patent No. 6,857,679; U.S. Application No. 10/121,747, filed April 12, 2002, now U.S. Patent No. 6,832,801; U.S. Provisional Application No. 60/290,817, filed ~~June 4, 2001~~ May 14, 2001; U.S. Provisional Application No. 60/490,883, filed July [[30]] 29, 2003; and U.S. Provisional Application No. 60/509,654, filed October [[9]] 7, 2003, the entire teachings of which are herein incorporated by reference.

Please replace the paragraph at page 4, lines 9 through 13 with the following amended paragraph:

Fig. 1 shows an electro-mechanical actuator 1 mounted to a handle assembly 2 of a tailgate 3. A sliding output rod 4 of the actuator 1 is pivotally connected to a connecting rod 5 that loops over a crank arm 6 of a pitman linkage 7. Tie rods 8, 9 connect the pitman linkage 7 to door latch retaining links [[10,]] (not shown), 11.

Please replace the paragraph at page 5, lines 1 through 5 with the following amended paragraph:

As the actuator 1 trips the latch retaining links [[10,]] (not shown), 11, spring loaded latch bolts 19, 20 flip open, simultaneously releasing the tailgate 3 and pushing it over the dead center upright position. Gravity then opens the tailgate 3 until the counter balance torque of the pre-stressed torsion rod spring 12 brings it to a stop, thus avoiding a free fall of the tailgate 3 and any ensuing damage.